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WANTED:
A DOCTRINE FOR THE U.S. COAST GUARD AS AN INSTRUMENT OF
NATIONAL SECURITY

by

Ty G. Waterman

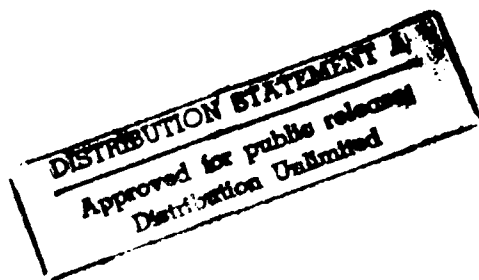
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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operation.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of the Navy, or the U.S. Coast Guard.

Signature: 

13 February 1992



92-12592



92 5 11 064

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No 0704-0188	
1a REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS		
2a SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3 DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY OF REPORT DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for Public Release: distribution is unlimited.		
2b DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			5 MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
4 PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			7a NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6a NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION <i>Operations Department</i>		6b OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)		7b ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	
6c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) <i>Naval War College Newport, R.I. 02841</i>		8a NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	
8c ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		9 PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
		10 SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO		PROJECT NO	TASK NO
				WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO	
11 TITLE (Include Security Classification) WANTED: A Doctrine for the U.S. Coast Guard as an Instrument of National Security (2)					
12 PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Waterman, Ty G., <i>Lcdr, USCG</i>					
13a TYPE OF REPORT <i>Final</i>		13b TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14 DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 92 February 13	
15 PAGE COUNT 47					
16 SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17 CCSATI CODES			18 SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP	Coast Guard, National Security, Doctrine		
19 ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)					
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20 DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21 ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL <i>Chairman, Operations Dept.</i>			22b TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) <i>841-3414</i>		22c OFFICE SYMBOL <i>C</i>

ABSTRACT OF
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The U.S. Coast Guard needs a doctrine to guide its relationship with national security. The purpose of this paper is to analyze that relationship, and to demonstrate why doctrine strongly recommends itself as a powerful tool for focusing thinking about the Coast Guard as an instrument of national security. The paper examines the problems of framing an analysis of the civil-military, multi-mission Coast Guard in light of the various connotations of national security; and derives fundamental understandings which would otherwise be provided by doctrine--were it available. The end product is a demonstration of doctrine feasibility in the form of a skeletal doctrine based on the Coast Guard-national security analysis. The paper concludes that national security is central to the Coast Guard's purpose, that problems from lack of doctrine plague the Coast Guard, and that it is in the interest of the Coast Guard to develop a Service doctrine built on the theme of national security.

PREFACE

Research for this paper began as an exploration of how best to apply the full range of U.S. Coast Guard capabilities to the 1991 National Security Strategy (NSS). It was immediately apparent that thinking about the Coast Guard's role in national security is influenced by the prospective from which the Service is viewed in relation to its multi-mission civil/military character. It also became apparent that internal Coast Guard policy guidance does not communicate a coherent vision of the Service's broad national security potential, nor for that matter, a single unifying purpose for the Service's multiple functions. Clear analysis was further complicated by the multiple meanings (and in some cases interchangeable use) ascribed to terms like *roles*, *missions*, and *national security*.

Defining the issue is central to disciplined and productive debate; yet ambiguous concepts of national security and of the Coast Guard itself have allowed considerations of the subject to develop from fundamentally different assumptions, and arguments to proceed at cross-purposes. Productive discussion of the Coast Guard's role in national security must be grounded in common understandings of what national security and the Coast Guard are; and doctrine suggests itself as a medium for fostering these understandings. The paper's thesis was developed in light of these considerations.

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WANTED: A DOCTRINE FOR THE U.S. COAST GUARD AS AN INSTRUMENT
OF NATIONAL SECURITY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem. The United States Coast Guard needs a governing doctrine to provide a common perspective and a way of thinking about its integral relationship with national security. In a changing world order, the Coast Guard offers flexible options to national leadership in addressing national security interests and objectives. However, thinking about application of Coast Guard resources to national security objectives is presently clouded by ambiguous concepts of national security and misperceptions of the Service itself.

The traditional equation of national security to military defense understates the Coast Guard's national security involvement. Its civil-military, multi-mission character fosters confused understandings of its purpose. Lack of a unifying doctrine leaves the Coast Guard seemingly unfocused, unable to clearly articulate its identity and purpose, and without a set of coherent principles for guidance.

The Solution. Ambiguity and misperception must be resolved in order to accurately assess and project the Coast Guard's role in national security. Planners, doers, and decision-makers must either begin from the same authoritative understandings and assumptions or they must work from their own interpretations--which might well be inaccurate and at cross-purposes. A Service doctrine would go far to dispel the Coast Guard's cloud of misperception and ambiguity; because a doctrine "provides a military organization with a common philosophy, a common language, a common purpose, and a unity of effort."¹

The Approach. The thrust of this paper is two-fold:

- 1) to derive fundamentals and conduct the analysis required to demonstrate extent of the Coast Guard's relationship to national security, and in doing so,
- 2) to illustrate the need for, and demonstrate the feasibility of constructing a Service doctrine for the Coast Guard.

CHAPTER II

A COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE COAST GUARD

The Problems of Perception. Outwardly, the Coast Guard looks like a conglomeration of unrelated or contradictory functions--"lifesavers," "cops," and "warriors"--all in the same blue wrapper. The service's small size and broad array of civilian and military interfaces give it the appearance of completely different services to its various clients.² The Gloucester fisherman, weekend boater, Exxon Corporation, Navy fleet commanders, and the governments of Haiti and Kuwait know markedly different Coast Guards--as do many Coast Guardsmen themselves. This diversity hinders a common understanding of the Service.

One result appears in the seemingly endless debate over Coast Guard roles and equipage. The perception of the Coast Guard as an organization with ambiguous purpose admits all nature of unfounded argument, constrained only by the assumptions of the advocate. For example, because published speculation over the service's warfighting role lacks deference to a commonly understood purpose and operating philosophy for the Service, authors freely arrive at conclusions like: "the Coast Guard is not equipped to fight"³ and its operating units are unarmed and untrained⁴; the Coast Guard should own minesweepers⁵ and diesel submarines.⁶

Another result of this seemingly unfocused collage of Coast Guard functions are recurrent attempts to dismember or eliminate the Service entirely. This is not an idle fear-- "Despite inherent flexibility and dedication on the part of its personnel, there have been more than 40 serious attempts to disband or civilianize the Coast Guard since its founding."⁷ For example, in 1982, a Department of Transportation (DoT) study group drafted a recommendation to improve DoT efficiency by cutting the Coast Guard from a military force of approximately 35,000 to a regulating agency of 8,000 civilians. Only the intervention of the National Security Council (NSC) circumvented this initiative.⁸

Fostering a common understanding of the Coast Guard is a necessary beginning to correcting the problems of perception. To develop this understanding, some fundamentals need to be reexamined.

What is a coast guard for? The fundamental purpose of a coast guard is to protect the maritime rights and carry out the maritime responsibilities of a coastal state. Generally, the objective of a nation-state's maritime policy is to use the sea for its own purposes and prevent others from using it to the state's disadvantage.⁹ Coastal states "have three broad peacetime rights and responsibilities off their coasts: sovereignty, jurisdiction, and recognized control; good order, including control of such diverse

elements as navigation, piracy, ship-source pollution, and waste disposal; and resource (fish, oil and gas, sand and gravel, minerals) use. In wartime, to these, littoral states must add 'sea control,' or at least 'sea denial,' to defend all of the above."¹⁰

Some type of naval force is needed to carry out a maritime policy, be it coastal or global in reach. In modeling naval functions as a combination of diplomatic, military, and policing roles, generic coast guard functions fall under the policing role. Included in this role are furtherance of coastal state interests through extension of sovereignty, contiguous area resource enjoyment, maintenance of good order, and contributing to internal stability and development.¹¹ The parallel between these generic coast guard functions and the rights and responsibilities of a coastal state illustrates the convergence of the rights of a littoral power with the responsibilities of a coast guard.

The U.S. Coast Guard. Understanding the organization and philosophy of U.S. Coast Guard operation is critical to resolving the problems of perception and for comprehending the versatility of the organization.

Multi-Mission. The U.S. Coast Guard advertises itself as "the world's leading maritime, humanitarian and safety organization."¹² Its responsibilities closely parallel the rights and responsibilities of coastal states and the

policing functions of navies (discussed above) through its four mission areas of maritime safety, maritime law enforcement, marine environmental protection, and national security (military defense)*¹³

Present Coast Guard policy is to balance the emphasis among the four mission areas, as each is considered to be of equal importance.¹⁴ In fact, there are few distinct boundaries across missions areas and resources. Instead, they overlap in training, equipage, and tasking at the unit level. The versatility of the Service is a great strength resulting from its multi-mission orientation.¹⁵

A Military Service. The underlying purpose for maintaining the Coast Guard as an armed force was clearly stated by the first Commandant of the modern Coast Guard over seventy years ago:

"The Coast Guard does not exist solely for the purpose of preparing for war. If it did there would then be, of course, two navies--a large one and a small one, and that condition, I am sure you will agree, could not long exist." "The Coast Guard occupies a peculiar position among other branches of the Government, and necessarily so from the dual character of its work, which is both civil and military. Its organization, therefore, must be such as will best adapt it to the performance of both classes of duties, and as a civil organization would not suffice for the performance of military functions, the organization of the service must be and is by law military." "That sort of an organization best enables the Coast Guard to keep prepared as an emergency service, and by organization along military lines it is invaluable in time of war as an adjunct and auxiliary to the Navy."¹⁶

* References generated by and about the Coast Guard use and interchange terms such as roles, missions, programs, etc. in inconsistent ways. Attempts to adhere to the variety of published conventions would render the discussion incomprehensible. For this reason, I have limited the nomenclature to missions (e.g., specialized functions--Commercial Vessel Safety, Aids to Navigation) and mission areas (groupings of related missions--e.g., Maritime Safety, Maritime Law Enforcement).

Although the Coast Guard has participated in all major wars and 33 campaigns since 1790,¹⁷ its duties as an auxiliary to the Navy were largely ad-hoc and undefined until the 1984 creation of the U.S. Maritime Defense Zones (MDZs). The MDZs are Navy commands headed by Coast Guard flag officers, and encompass the defense of U.S. ports, harbors, and coastal waters out to 200 miles off shore¹⁸ (an area of responsibility which coincides with the Coast Guard-patrolled Exclusive Economic Zone). Getting this responsibility did not require a restructuring of the Coast Guard, since the MDZ concept makes use of existing organizations and command relationships.¹⁹ Peacetime mission skills readily transfer to wartime application.

Because of its civil-military composition and humanitarian reputation, the military character of the Coast Guard can be either transparent or dominant, according to the setting. For example, unarmed Coast Guard icebreakers spend much of their time supporting the scientific community, yet they regularly conduct freedom of navigation transits of the Northwest Passage. At the other end of the spectrum, high endurance cutters (comparable to frigates) participate as warships in NATO fleet exercises; but one was dispatched for command and control of search operations for KAL 007 off the (Soviet) Sakhalin Islands.²⁰

As with its multi-mission aspects, the Coast Guard's military character enhances both the capability and versatility of the Service.²¹

CHAPTER III
THE COAST GUARD'S RELATIONSHIP
WITH NATIONAL SECURITY

How the Coast Guard fits into national security is a function of how the term *national security* is being defined. The various connotations serve to either constrain or liberate thinking about the extent of the Coast Guard's involvement.

The Traditional View. The traditional view of *national security* focuses solely on protecting the individual nation-state from external attack, therefore equating national security to military defense.²² As already discussed, the Coast Guard functions as an auxiliary force under the Navy for purposes of military defense. Under this view, the Coast Guard intersects national security exclusively as a subset of the Navy, and then only under the aegis of its military defense mission area. A recent survey concerning the Coast Guard's national security role (Navy and Coast Guard flag officers, Commanders-in-Chief of Unified Commands, senior policy makers, and civilian naval analysts responding) clearly demonstrated that this traditional view is a common perspective among senior decision makers.²³

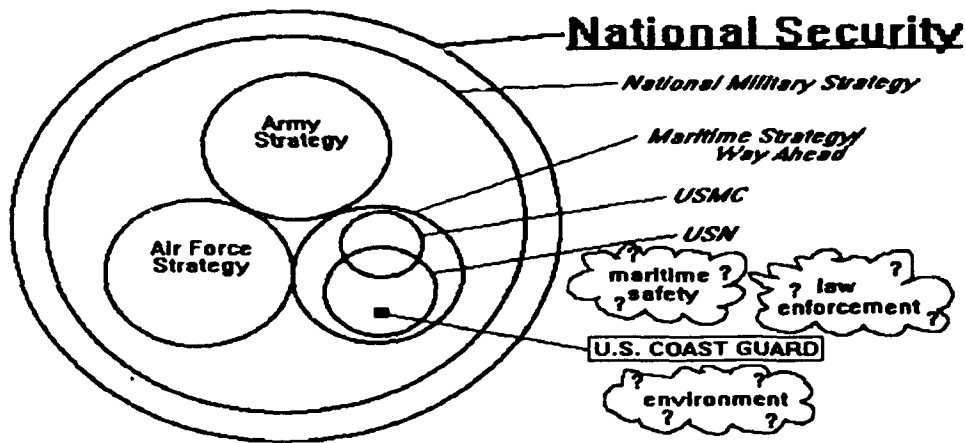


Figure 1
U.S. Coast Guard Interface with National Security
"Traditional" Perspective

Figure 1 illustrates the Coast Guard's place in national security using the perspective of the traditional view.

The Contemporary View. Contemporary studies recognize that national security involves more than the procurement and application of military forces.²⁴ In this broadened view, national security includes economic, diplomatic, and social dimensions in addition to military defense. It also considers the security of values.²⁵ This is the perspective taken by the senior national leadership, as the economic, diplomatic, and social aspects of national security are found alongside military defense in the 1991 National Security Strategy of the United States.²⁶

Shifting Perspectives. The Commandant's Strategic Agenda is a keystone document providing official policy guidance for the Coast Guard. In organization, it hews to the traditional view of segregating national security (largely national defense functions) into one of four separate and distinct mission areas; but in content, the Agenda also shows the overlap of the four Coast Guard mission areas with the diplomatic, social, economic, and military elements of the contemporary view. References to economic prosperity, defense of citizens and property, national well-being, and international involvement recur throughout the Agenda.²⁷

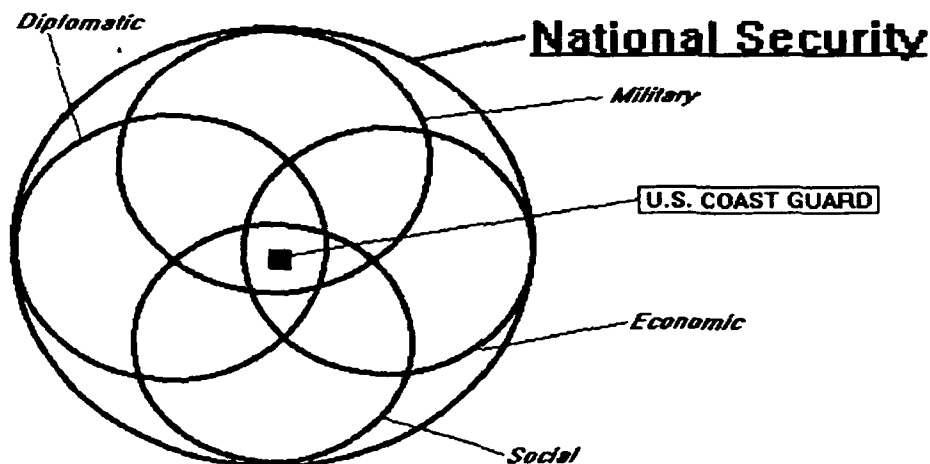


Figure 2
U.S. Coast Guard Interface with National Security
"Contemporary" Perspective

The contemporary view gives a different perspective to the Coast Guard's relationship with national security, as Figure 2 illustrates. Locating the Coast Guard (and all its

mission areas) at the overlap of the four national security elements reflects the multi-mission involvement of the Service in all areas of national security.

The Coast Guard as a National Security Instrument. In an era of world change and shrinking U.S. military resources, Unified Commanders-in-Chiefs (CinCs) considering possible courses of action, as well as other national level planning, decision, and policy makers (e.g., Cabinet Secretaries, NSC, Congress) should be aware of options offered by the multi-mission, civil-military Coast Guard. A sample of Coast Guard capabilities and historical performance illustrates the support the Service can provide to the current national security strategy.

- Regional Stability: One of the Unified CinCs recently observed: "When regional tensions heighten, the presence of a multi-mission Coast Guard cutter or contingent is often less threatening to Host Nation sovereignty concerns than a DOD asset would be simply because it is not perceived as a U.S. 'military' presence. Yet, that presence still demonstrates U.S. commitment to our allies and can be an effective deterrent to aggression."²⁸

- Foreign Assistance and Presence: Mexico's President Salinas recently made a special point to convey the high regard with which the U.S. Coast Guard is held among the developing countries. Coast Guard international access and stature are derived from its performance of generic coast

guard functions such as search and rescue, drug interdiction, aids to navigation, fisheries enforcement, and environmental protection. Coast Guard cutters and aircraft routinely visit other nations and cooperate with their forces. In fact, the coastal maritime forces of many nations are modeled after or originated with the assistance of the U.S. Coast Guard (e.g., Japan, Republic of Korea, Costa Rica, Panama). The Coast Guard is presently active in 21 countries; and its mobile training detachments visited 45 foreign nations in 1990.²⁹

- The Environment: The Coast Guard is recognized worldwide as a leader in environmental issues. Most of the international treaties on pollution have resulted from Coast Guard efforts.³⁰ At home, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA-90) "represents the single largest tasking the Coast Guard has ever received from Congress."³¹ President Bush responded to Saddam Hussein's Persian Gulf oil dumping by dispatching maritime oil spill damage response and assessment experts from the U.S. Coast Guard--a demonstration of our nation's concern which helped to bolster world public opinion on the side of the United States and its Coalition allies.³²

- Terrorism: Counterterrorism experts say terrorists are likely to increasingly turn their attention from aircraft to ships and trains.³³ Coast Guard port security forces develop maritime counter-terrorism tactics and protective measures for passenger vessels and are developing

sophisticated detection systems to ensure port security.³⁴ During the Gulf War, detailed Maritime Defense Zone planning and well-rehearsed precautions helped effectively deter acts of terrorism.³⁵

- Promoting Trade and a Healthy Economy: "A safe, efficient transportation system in this country [is vital] if the economy and our standard of living are going to be maintained. This falls in the Coast Guard's area of search and rescue, commercial vessel safety, port safety, icebreaking, [and] aids to navigation."³⁶ U.S. trading partners traverse U.S. waters and the world's oceans using U.S. navigation systems and operate under international rules of the road, of which the Coast Guard is custodian.³⁷

- Drug Interdiction and Eradication: In addition to its more well known sea and air interdiction efforts, the Coast Guard has provided training and advisory teams to the riverine forces of Bolivia and Ecuador for source country drug interdiction/eradication operations. Coast Guard C-130s have been used to transport Peruvian troops engaged in counternarcotic operations. Coast Guard H-3 helicopters have been employed to transport indigenous eradication teams into remote areas controlled by drug growers in Central America.³⁸

- Crisis Response: The Coast Guard responded to an act of diplomacy in the U.S. national interest by reflagging the Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Persian Gulf.³⁹ During Operation Desert Shield, "the U.S. Central Command requested Coast

Guard 'boarding teams' be placed aboard Navy Ships for enforcing the embargo...During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, Coast Guard boarding parties similarly were assigned to Navy ships to board Russian vessels."⁴⁰

- Immigrants and Refugees: Unregulated immigration could lead to domestic problems and also prejudice U.S. relationships abroad.⁴¹ Since 1981, the Coast Guard has interdicted thousands of undocumented aliens from 37 different countries, though primarily from Haiti, The Dominican Republic, and Cuba.⁴²

- An Effective Military Force - Joint Operations: "Since 1989 counternarcotics at sea has been under the control of Joint Task Force Four (JTF-4), a multiservice force dedicated solely to counternarcotics interdiction. JTF-4 uses a vast command-and-control network, including an afloat element...composed of Navy vessels, with Coast Guard cutters operating under Navy operational control until the moment of enforcement action...Counternarcotics is very much a military 'game,' run according to joint-operations guidelines."⁴³

National Security as a Central Theme of the Coast Guard. As can be seen from the examples above, national security is an underlying theme throughout the four Coast Guard mission areas. So critical is this relationship that when the DoT study group (discussed earlier) recommendations threatened the Service's very existence, it was the Coast

Guard's integral association with national security that prevented the organization's demise.

"Both the NSC and DoD regarded the conversion of the Coast Guard into a civilian agency and the resulting loss to national security as unacceptable since it would eliminate the availability of Coast Guard general-purpose forces. The NSC and DoD wanted these forces maintained, not only for nationally important peacetime missions (polar icebreaking, aids to navigation, law enforcement, etc.), but for critical wartime missions (coastal antisubmarine, interdiction, search and rescue, port security, etc.) as well."⁴⁴

Some would argue that the central theme of Coast Guard is its *maritime* connection. It's a *maritime* service. Its mission statement calls it "...the nation's primary *maritime* operating agency."⁴⁵ Its vision statement calls it "...the world's leading *maritime*, humanitarian, and safety organization." Write-ups in the 1992 U.S. Coast Guard Overview heavily and repeatedly emphasize the *maritime* aspect of the service.⁴⁶ All of this is true.

The problem is that *maritime* is but an adjective describing the Coast Guard's operating environment, not what the service is supposed to accomplish. The missions of *maritime* law enforcement, *maritime* safety, etc. are united in the *maritime* sense only by the conditions under which they are performed. These missions are united in function, however, by their support of national security.

National security is not where the Coast Guard performs its missions--it is central to what the Coast Guard does.

CHAPTER IV

A DOCTRINE FOR THE COAST GUARD

Thinking About Doctrine. Doctrine should be an approved, credible, overarching concept that lends coherence to the myriad activities of an organization.⁴⁷ It provides a military organization with a common philosophy, a common language, a common purpose, a unity of effort,⁴⁸ and a commonly understood starting point from which to develop solutions to specific future challenges.⁴⁹ Doctrine provides a way of thinking.⁵⁰

The underlying concepts of doctrine are not unique to the military. For example, IBM's Thomas Watson, Jr. wrote that: "any organization, in order to survive and achieve success, must have a sound set of beliefs on which it premises all its policies and actions."⁵¹ Management theorist Philip Selznick similarly observed that a long-lived organization is marked by "choices which fix the assumptions of policy makers as to the nature of the enterprise, its distinctive aims, methods, and roles."⁵² These concepts strongly resemble the Joint Chiefs of Staff's *common understandings and fundamental principles* by which military forces guide their actions,⁵³ and certainly speak to a common philosophy and purpose within the organization.

The Coast Guard provides internal guidance for performing its various missions which incorporate some of the concepts of doctrine. Well-written, comprehensive

manuals approximating doctrine exist for missions such as Search and Rescue, Aids to Navigation, and Maritime Law Enforcement. Missing, however, is that approved, credible, overarching concept that would give a unified coherence to the sum of these myriad activities, a Service doctrine.

Working Without Doctrine. The Coast Guard needs, but does not have a governing Service doctrine. The following sections illustrate some of the problems this allows.

A Common Purpose. The Coast Guard has not been able to clearly articulate a common purpose for the Service. Rather, the overarching concept it emphasizes is its maritime connection. While the Coast Guard may be the nation's primary maritime operating agency, its stated purpose is to perform the functions of four different mission areas.⁵⁴ The result is predictable. Articles in the Coast Guard's own Academy alumni magazine observe that: "Few people, even in the service, can understand or articulate concisely what the Coast Guard is."⁵⁵ Of greater concern, this apparent lack of common purpose makes the Service a repeated target for well intentioned, one-dimensional "efficiency" proposals, such as the previously mentioned 1982 DoT study and the 1984 Grace Commission recommendations to privatize, demilitarize, and otherwise subdivide or eliminate the Coast Guard.⁵⁶

Fundamental Understandings and Principles. The fundamental principles and understandings of the Coast Guard are not being adequately communicated within the organization and to others outside the organization. Whether the Coast Guard is tasked at the request of the National Command Authorities, the State Department, a cognizant CinC, or Congress is of less importance than the existence of a shared understanding between these authorities and the service itself of its purpose, capabilities, and operating philosophy in order to properly evaluate what the Service can and should be expected to do. For example, the Coast Guard is the MDZ coordinator and an auxiliary force for the Navy; yet deficiencies in understanding of this fundamental principle contributed to:

- Letters from Coast Guard officers in the Academy alumni magazine reporting the "element of confusion and/or uncertainty [in the service] as to the role that Coast Guard units will play in a future conflict."⁵⁷

- Congressional thwarting of the 1988 Navy request for Coast Guard 110' patrol boats to assist in the Persian Gulf (tanker war). "the benefits from adding the six small vessels to the gulf fleet were not worth the political fight."⁵⁸

A Commonly Understood Starting Point. (from which to develop solutions to specific future challenges) Much of the analysis in this paper would have been unnecessary if

the Coast Guard had a governing doctrine. Because there is no doctrine, framing the argument required the preliminary step of developing enough fundamental concepts (e.g., What is a coast guard for? What does *national security* mean?) to ensure that the problem was defined and analyzed from common understandings and a known perspective.

This step developed a foundation for the argument, but it could not guarantee of that foundation's veracity. Only the Coast Guard can provide the authoritative interpretation of these concepts; and only the Coast Guard can provide the authoritative basis that will ensure future planning and analysis are in consonance with its purpose as an organization. Until such guidance is forthcoming, any author, analyst, or decision-maker is not only free to, but of necessity *must* develop conclusions about the Coast Guard based on personal research and analysis, colloquial perspective, or purely home-grown assumptions.

A Doctrine for the Coast Guard. A service doctrine would clearly communicate to persons both within and outside the Service what the Coast Guard does, how to think about what it does, and how it goes about doing its business. The appropriate theme is national security. A Coast Guard collectively oriented to its relationship with national security would result in a Service unified in *purpose*, and offering a flexible range of options for the responding to the challenges of a changing world order.

The Raw Material of Doctrine. The 1989 Commandant's Long Range View and 1990 Commandant's Strategic Agenda contain much of the raw material for a Coast Guard doctrine. They are unsuitable as doctrine per se, but do discuss what the Coast Guard does and the direction the organization wants to go. They provide limited amounts of broad guidance, historical perspective, and organizational philosophy. Of the two, the Agenda is more succinct and aligned with the present Commandant's philosophies. Other sources of doctrine include models provided by the doctrines of other services, existing Coast Guard manuals, policy statements, operating philosophies, historical relationships, and the labors of other advocates of doctrine for the Coast Guard.⁵⁹

A Skeletal Doctrine. Developing a comprehensive draft doctrine for the Coast Guard far exceeds the scope of this paper; but a draft Coast Guard doctrine might include:

- The Coast Guard exists for the performance of functions which further the national security of the United States. The interests and objectives of national security are central to the purpose of the Coast Guard. All Coast Guard mission areas support some aspect of national security.

- The Coast Guard maintains a versatility borne of the multi-mission abilities of its people and platforms. The Coast Guard discourages single-mission advocacy and single-

mission limitations on its operating units. Maintaining a balance among all mission areas is a guarantee of retaining the capabilities to accomplish them.

- The primary peacetime focus of the Coast Guard is to maintain the security, sovereignty, and rights of the United States and its citizens in the nation's coastal waters and Exclusive Economic Zone; support the economic health and development of the United States; and assist other nations in areas of Coast Guard expertise, as directed by the national leadership.

- The Coast Guard is a military service and armed force of the United States. It has statutory responsibility for the Maritime Defense Zones and maintains a readiness posture to operate with the Navy when so directed.

- The primary wartime focus of the Coast Guard is to protect the ports, harbors, and littoral areas of the United States; and to function as an auxiliary arm of the Navy, with a priority on providing personnel and platforms as needed to support the warfighting strategy.

- The Coast Guard aggressively pursues interoperability and joint operations with other services and agencies. Coast Guard planning, training, operating procedures, and equipment acquisitions give due consideration to the requirements of interoperability.

- Consistent with the national interests, the Coast Guard exercises world leadership and initiative in areas of its special recognized expertise.

- The Coast Guard enjoys a special status in the eyes of the world that gives it extraordinary access in international relationships. The Coast Guard is sensitive to the need of protecting this status in order to assure continued access in the future.

Problems in Development and Making Doctrine Work.

- Acceptance: As one author noted about the doctrinal process, "Doctrine is a product of the bureaucratic politics and personalities of [in this case] the army it serves as much as it is the objective best available thought."⁶⁰ Doctrine may be well-reasoned and forward-thinking, but unless it represents a shared vision consistent with the agendas of the leadership of the service, it might go nowhere.

- Domestic Politics: Domestic politics can disrupt the soundest of concepts. Congress has calcified the Coast Guard's flexibility in the past through the mechanisms of appropriations. An organizational tenet such as balance among mission areas cannot be maintained if unbalanced levels of effort in particular areas are congressionally mandated.⁶¹ Another example is the unsuccessful attempt to send Coast Guard patrol boats to the Persian Gulf in the tanker war (discussed earlier)--another product of Congressional intervention. This problem may never disappear entirely, but the possibility exists that a well-publicized doctrine could also foster unity thought among

the Coast Guard's legislative constituency and thereby help circumvent problems of this nature.

- Ability to Stay the Course: The Coast Guard gets new service leadership a minimum of every four years and usually a new Department Secretary (DoT) at more frequent intervals. These people have their own priorities and agendas; and it is not unknown for the character of the service to change dramatically from one regime to the next.* For doctrine to survive and develop in its refinement, not only the present leadership, but its successors as well, must believe in the value of doctrine.

* personal observations since 1971

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions. Lack of doctrine plagues the Coast Guard because of the Service's multi-mission civil-military nature. The absence of doctrine, in combination with the multi-mission, civil-military characteristics of the Service, admits fundamental misunderstandings to analysis and planning of Coast Guard capabilities and employment.

The common thread uniting all Coast Guard activities is national security. The Service needs to differentiate national security from national defense. It also must clarify these concepts in relation to the contemporary view of national security as used in the 1991 national security strategy. Using its national security relationship as a unifying theme, the Coast Guard needs to develop a body of fundamental understandings of the Service and its capabilities in order to structure thinking about its future direction and employment.

Doctrine is the appropriate medium for this process. Doctrine would provide authoritative interpretation of the fundamentals needed for framing constructive debate over issues involving the Coast Guard. It would establish a common framework and boundaries for future planning and decision-making, and guide thinking about the Coast Guard.

A unifying Coast Guard doctrine is within reach. The Commandant's Long-Range View and The Commandant's Strategic Agenda exhibit many elements of doctrine, even though they are themselves unserviceable for that purpose. For doctrine to succeed, it must be adopted by Coast Guard leadership, communicated within and outside the organization to foster support for its concepts; and it must continue beyond the tenure of the current Service leadership.

For doctrine to succeed, it must first exist.

APPENDIX I

The Commandant's Strategic Agenda
Commandant Instruction 16000.21, 14 SEP 1990



COMDTINST 16000.21

COMMANDANT INSTRUCTION 16000.21

14 SEP 1990

Subj: The Commandant's Strategic Agenda

1. **PURPOSE.** The Commandant's Strategic Agenda is my personal view of what the Coast Guard is, what we do, and which direction we will take in the next four years and beyond. It contains a mission statement, a description of our roles, and a number of goals and general policies. The Agenda includes broad guidance derived from the Department of Transportation's National Transportation Plan, and several specific objectives which I want to accomplish during my tenure as Commandant.
2. **DEFINITIONS:** Before reading the Agenda, it's beneficial to define a few terms:
 - a. Our mission is a broad statement of what we are and our purpose for being. It is the mandate towards which all our effort is directed.
 - b. Our roles are the major functions, or mission components, of the Coast Guard. Each role has a historical foundation and allows us to adopt and develop new programs.
 - c. Goals are our targets or specific desired future results. Goals are derived from our roles.
 - d. Policies are parameters or guidelines placed upon program initiatives and plans.
3. **DISCUSSION:** During my tenure as Commandant, I intend to balance the emphasis among Coast Guard roles to better reflect our national priorities and allocate our limited resources among programs. I am particularly interested in establishing an adequate support structure for our people and facilities. Support programs are essential to the success of operations and I want to acknowledge the value of support personnel and services. The Strategic Agenda is not an action plan which outlines a step-by-step method of achieving balance or any of the stated goals. Rather, it is a guide which should be used by Program Directors to develop program initiatives so that we can move forward, in unison and in the same direction. I expect this policy guidance to be used in all phases of our planning process and each Program Director to develop several alternative plans in the Issues/Determinations process which would accomplish our goals. This will allow us to choose and plot a coordinated course into the future.

J. W. Kime
J. W. KIME

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COMMANDANT'S STRATEGIC AGENDA

MISSION. The United States Coast Guard is the nation's primary maritime operating agency. We protect life and property at sea, enforce federal laws and treaties, preserve marine natural resources, and promote national security interests. As one of the nation's five Armed Forces, it is our military character - our organization and discipline; our command, control and communications structure; and our multi-mission surface and air capabilities - which enables us to perform our civil duties within the Department of Transportation, as well as function in the Department of the Navy when the Congress or President so directs. The Coast Guard hallmark is quality service to the public.

COAST GUARD ROLES. Historically, the Coast Guard has been assigned four primary roles: maritime law enforcement, national security, maritime safety, and marine environmental protection. While the relative emphasis and balance given to these four areas has varied from time to time, our roles have remained constant and are of equal importance to the Coast Guard. Another constant is our reliance on qualified people and dependable equipment, therefore, personnel support and facility and hardware management are major internal concerns of the Service. The goals and the policies which will govern our efforts in each of these roles and major concerns are described below.

Maritime Law Enforcement - Our maritime law enforcement role dates from 1790. In responding to changing national priorities, we are constantly challenged to balance the emphasis we give to our humanitarian safety role relative to our law enforcement role. Today, Americans consider drugs to be one of the major problems facing the nation. The war against drugs is being waged on the high seas, along our borders, and in our cities. We must continue to give high priority to drug interdiction on the sea and in the air. At the same time, we must aggressively enforce all laws and treaties, protect our resources in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and remain attuned to emerging national priorities.

Goal - The United States Coast Guard will promote national well-being, security, and economic prosperity by enforcing national and international laws and treaties throughout the maritime region which include:

- prevent and deter the entry of illicit drugs, illegal aliens, and contraband,
- protect national economic interests relating to fisheries, and other resources in the EEZ, and
- provide assistance to Federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

Policies - As law enforcement programs are developed they will be tested for consistency with the intent of the Administration and Congress, the level of resources made available, and the following policy guidance:

- + Increase the capability to detect and interdict the movement of illicit drugs using the resources and expertise which the Coast Guard, DOD and, other Federal, state and local forces can contribute to the effort;
- + Improve operations leading to the interdiction and repatriation of illegal immigrants;
- + Provide adequate enforcement to protect fisheries and govern other activities in the Exclusive Economic Zone; and
- + Provide assistance to Federal and non-Federal authorities in support of Coast Guard law enforcement duties.



National Security - The Coast Guard will continue to play an important role in U.S. defense because of our unique civil and military capabilities. We must continue to work closely with the Department of Defense and other federal agencies to ensure that our capabilities are utilized in an effective and efficient manner.

With the projected reduction of U.S. troops in Europe and Asia, the potential exists for an even greater outload and sealift of materials in response to an overseas crisis. Consequently, emphasis will continue to be placed on port security contingency planning.

Protracted struggles among competing economic principles and political and religious ideologies will continue to promote global unrest. Due to our non-belligerent reputation, the Coast Guard will increasingly be called upon to play a larger role in supporting our nation's foreign policy and protecting our national interests.

Goal - The United States Coast Guard must help ensure our national security by engaging in domestic and international efforts which enhance the image of the United States, protect our economic interests and defend U.S. property and citizens.

Policies - As national security/defense readiness programs are developed, the cost - the demand on assets, must be weighed against the national benefit, the impact on other CG roles, and the Administration's and Congress' intentions. All national security/defense readiness programs will comply with one of the following guidance policies:

- + Focus attention on ports and waterways which are critical to our nation's security and enhance strategic sealift capabilities;
- + Identify specific sensitive ports and facilities and establish a priority for protecting them from incursion;
- + Prepare for meaningful participation in joint services exercises based on tasks assigned in mobilization plans;
- + Improve and simplify our exercise planning procedures through better inter-unit and inter-District coordination and sharing;
- + Enhance our ability to support U.S. security interests in low intensity conflict, peace keeping activities and security assistance operations;
- + Expand the Coast Guard's range and number of international relationships primarily with maritime nations needing the expertise, skills and resources we can provide;
- + Increase polar icebreaker capability in support of national logistic and scientific requirements;
- + Upgrade all Long Range Aids to Navigation operations as technology and new systems become available;
- + Conduct Maritime Defense Zone Operations when tasked; and
- + Prepare the Coast Guard Reserve to augment active forces in additional selected activities.



Maritime Safety - Initially, federal marine safety efforts focused on developing aids-to-navigation systems and assisting mariners in distress. Over the years, the emphasis shifted towards mishap prevention by enactment and enforcement of safety regulations. We must balance our emphasis between preventive, regulatory activities and operational, response activities, to promote a safe, viable national marine transportation system.

Goal - The United States Coast Guard will facilitate safe, effective marine transportation and promote the maritime public's well-being and economic prosperity by minimizing injury, death, or property damage, on, over, and under the high seas and waters subject to the jurisdiction of the United States. To this end, we:

- respond to calls for assistance throughout the maritime regions,
- reduce the loss of life and property through boating safety and other programs,
- operate marine aids to navigation and vessel traffic management systems,
- act as the lead agency representing the United States at the International Maritime Organization and other international maritime forums,
- regulate construction of commercial and recreational vessels and offshore marine platforms,
- regulate operation of commercial vessels engaged in U.S. trade,
- promote the safe transportation of petroleum and other hazardous materials, and
- operate the nation's polar and domestic icebreakers.

Policies - As maritime safety programs are formulated they will be tested for consistency with the following policy guidance:

- + Strengthen search and rescue capabilities;
- + Coordinate improved response to natural and man-made disasters;
- + Promote Boating Safety through cooperative programs which utilize the Coast Guard Auxiliary, other volunteer organizations, or state and local agencies, in ways which do not conflict with private enterprise;
- + Improve aids to navigation systems consistent with technological advances;
- + Expand and improve Vessel Traffic Systems (VTS) in major ports in conjunction with documented needs;
- + Promote measures to ensure the competence of mariners operating in U.S. waters;
- + Assess the impact of regulations and remove regulatory and other barriers that impede productivity and a free flow of interstate commerce;
- + Support the competitiveness of the U.S. Merchant Marine to assure its survival and ability to support national security operations;
- + Conduct icebreaking operations in support of national commercial, scientific, and security interests;
- + Provide scientific and oceanographic support services to other agencies as required by the national interest; and
- + Assist developing nations meet their maritime safety needs.





Marine Environmental Protection – Our role in marine environment and resource protection dates from the 1820s. Today, growing concern over ocean dumping of solid and medical waste, and coastal and riverine pollution, as well as the Exxon Valdez and other oil spills, has moved protecting the environment into prominence on the national agenda. During the next decade we can expect to become increasingly active in pollution prevention and response activities.

Goal – The United States Coast Guard will protect the marine environment, and preserve our natural resources while promoting national well-being and economic prosperity, through actions which:

- prevent the discharge of oil, chemicals, and other hazardous materials into the marine environment,
- ensure the quick, effective detection and cleanup of discharges which do occur,
- regulate shoreside and offshore material handling facilities,
- coordinate spill response and cleanup operations,
- represent U.S. interests at national and international forums on the marine environment, and
- improve our standing in the environmental and scientific communities.

Policies – As marine environmental protection programs are formulated they will be tested for consistency with the following policy guidance:

- + Represent the United States at national and international forums convened to discuss marine environment protection issues;
- + Establish vessel routing measures for tankers and other commercial vessels use for entry, departure and coastal transit to and from major ports;
- + Propose construction standards to increase vessel operating and navigation safety capabilities and minimize cargo loss if hull integrity is violated (mindful of the current American fleet);
- + Require improved crew team-training in conducting shipboard evolutions that maintain safe operations and hull integrity;
- + Promote use of remote off-loading facilities where feasible and available;
- + Pursue a coordinated research and development (R&D) effort for prevention and response to oil and hazardous material spills;
- + Require Coast Guard participation and approval in developing port contingency plans for handling petroleum and hazardous materials spills;
- + Provide resources to support a national response system including the National Response Center and National Strike Team;
- + Require periodic exercises in the rapid deployment of containment and cleanup equipment and personnel;
- + Establish regulations for the qualification of personnel in spill management and certify personnel as competent to participate and oversee spill operations;
- + Conduct comprehensive review of existing legislation to determine if additional legislation is needed to clarify or modify current statutes; and
- + Assist and encourage industries' efforts to provide cleanup capabilities.

Personnel Support - The success of our organization is dependent upon the dedication and abilities of its members — active duty military, reserve military, civilian employees, the volunteers of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and service contractors. A well trained, cohesive, flexible and motivated work force is essential to our mission — protecting life and property and promoting the interests of the United States.

Goal - To accomplish our mission the Coast Guard must:

- attract sufficient people who are physically and mentally qualified to accomplish any duty or task assigned to them;
- provide unbiased opportunity for training, job assignment, and advancement;
- provide a safe working environment,
- compensate people adequately and commensurate with their skills and knowledge, and the demands of their job assignment and location; and
- retain sufficient people to maintain a high level of performance and capability.

Policies - Personnel programs must balance the needs of the service with the needs of our people. These two demands are inextricably intertwined as the Coast Guard's primary need is a workforce which is capable of safely performing the job. The following personnel issues must be addressed. The Coast Guard must:

- + Attract and recruit a qualified workforce which represents the diverse composition of our society. Equal Opportunity goals and recruiting efforts targeted to minorities are designed to attract and retain good people and must not impinge on the rights of any individual.
- + Operate training facilities which adequately prepare people to safely accomplish their assigned task;
- + Assign people jobs which they are capable and qualified to handle;
- + Adjust tour lengths and rotation dates to minimize the impact of moves on members and their dependents;
- + Minimize the hardship of assigning families to high cost or isolated areas by providing access to affordable housing;
- + Insure that adequate, cost effective medical / dental care is provided to authorized beneficiaries;
- + Enhance the availability of family services;
- + Provide advancement opportunities in all career paths (operational and support), recognizing the contribution of specialized career tracking;
- + Provide career counseling and allow members as much choice as possible in choosing their own career moves after they have a clear understanding of the probable result of their decision;
- + Attract and retain skilled civilians by improving career opportunities; and
- + Provide retirees and dependents the support to which they are entitled.



Information, Facility and Hardware Management - The United States Coast Guard is committed to providing our people with all the necessary resources to safely accomplish their assigned tasks in service to the American public. Furthermore, the Coast Guard is committed to providing healthful work and living environments for all Coast Guard personnel.

Goal - To accomplish our mission the Coast Guard must:

- project its future needs for equipment, capital and real property, and assess the condition, life expectancy and utility of its inventory to meet current and future requirements,
- maintain a capital asset acquisition plan to meet current and projected needs,
- Increase efficiency and enhance capability through Information Resource Management,
- conduct a research, development, testing and evaluation program which surveys new and existing technologies which meet Coast Guard specific requirements or which would enhance the Coast Guard's ability to provide efficient, cost effective service,
- maintain a capital plant and real property until it is no longer needed,
- comply with federal environmental laws governing hazardous waste disposal and remediation/restoration of despoiled Coast Guard property, and
- acquire the necessary people and funding to adequately operate and maintain new and existing assets.

Policies - The Coast Guard's capital plant is currently valued at over sixteen billion dollars. The American people have entrusted us with this investment and rightfully expect the Coast Guard to maintain the property and return dividends in the form of services. The "portfolio" includes investments in cutters, aircraft, boats and shore facilities; hardware -- tools and information systems needed to do a job safely and efficiently; real property -- work space and housing; and people. The following resource management issues must be considered. The Coast Guard must:

- + Maintain a capital investment plan which programs property / hardware replacement, allowing for budget projections and the lengthy acquisition process;
- + Recognize that safety is paramount - when acquiring equipment or designing facilities, the safety, gender and skill level of the intended user must be considered;
- + Continually survey new technologies and applications of technology which would improve the Coast Guard's efficiency or effectiveness.
- + Upgrade facilities and equipment as roles change, new technologies are employed, or obsolescence is identified;
- + Emphasize compatibility and interchangeability of new equipment with existing equipment, training requirements and phase in of all equipment;
- + Acquire standardized equipment which improves interoperability with other agencies and is fully supportable within Coast Guard or other federal government resources;
- + Provide for the construction of vessels with skimming characteristics in addition to traditional capabilities;
- + Provide a healthful working environment for all our people.
- + Increase the number of government owned or government leased housing units available to our service members;
- + Improve support of the capital plant; and
- + Maintain responsive logistics and maintenance support systems.



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